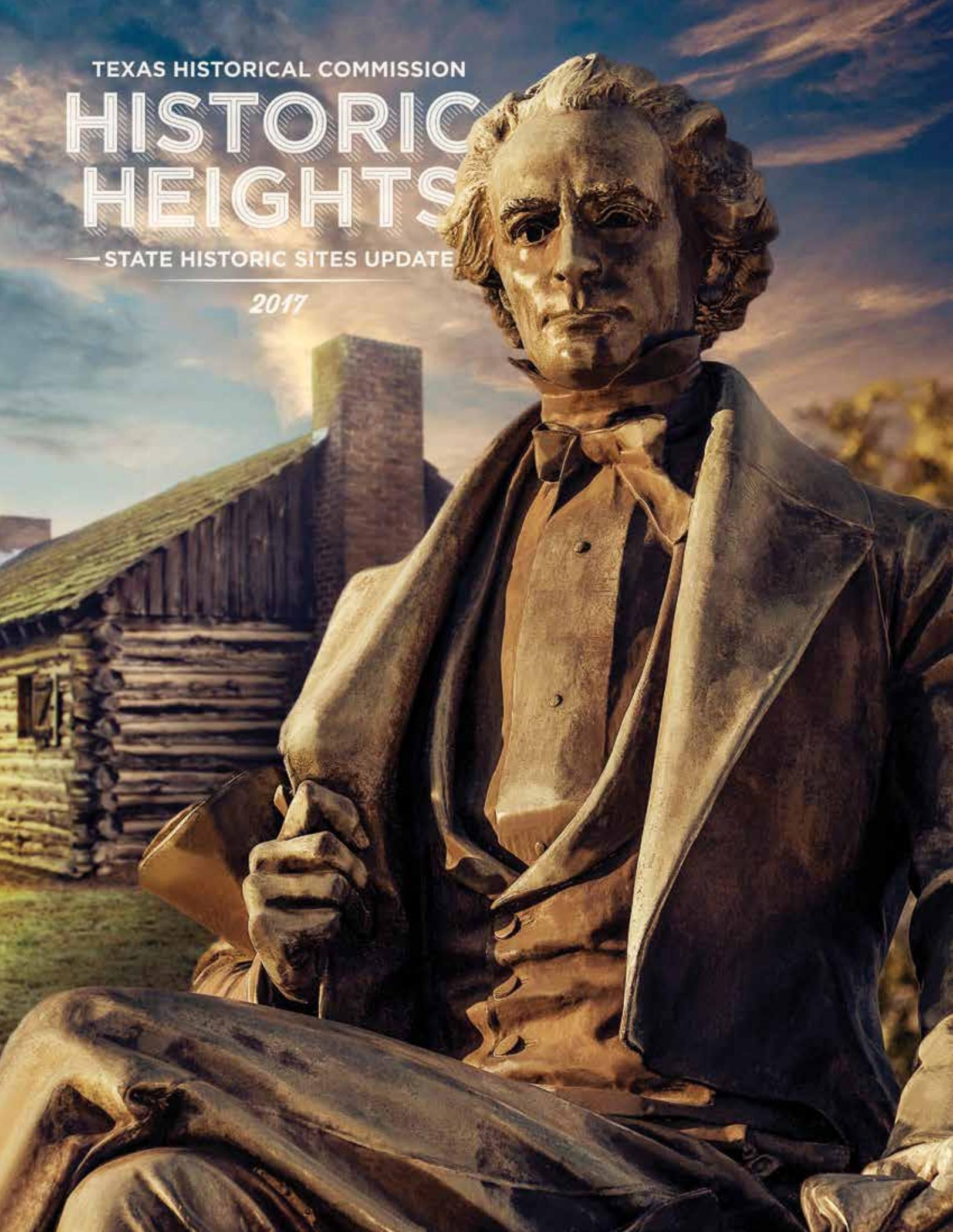


TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

# HISTORIC HEIGHTS

— STATE HISTORIC SITES UPDATE

2017



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR SITES

The Texas Historical Commission's (THC) 21 state historic sites have undergone many exciting changes in the past two years. Several sites now include new visitors centers and top-to-bottom renovations.

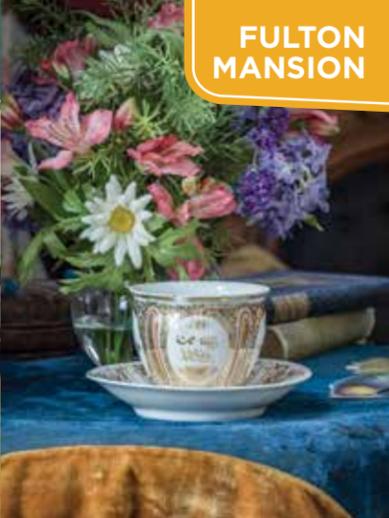
With these ongoing enhancements, the THC is proud to position these sites as unique heritage destinations, where quality experiences reinforce the Texas mystique through dynamic storytelling.



SAN FELIPE de AUSTIN



FORT GRIFFIN



FULTON MANSION

Pictured left to right: THC Executive Director **Mark Wolfe**, State Sen. **Robert Nichols**, State Rep. **Trent Ashby**, and THC Chairman **John L. Nau, III**



## DYNAMIC PROGRAMMING ENGAGES VISITORS

Historic sites programming is dynamic, engaging, and interesting to broad demographics and subject matter interest groups. Living history programs at the sites draw visitors seeking tangible and personal interactions with Texas heritage. The sense of place created at these events brings history to life. A camel brigade at **Fort Lancaster**, the live cannon firing at **Fort Griffin**, Texas Revolution encampments at **San Felipe de Austin**, and the Victorian tea at the **Fulton Mansion** are just a few examples of the exciting experiences offered to visitors.

The THC's West Texas forts—**Fort Lancaster**, **Fort Griffin**, and **Fort McKavett**—showcase some of the most beautiful night skies in Texas. They explode with illuminations from constellations, galaxies, and planets. The forts' on-site programs draw a broad spectrum of people interested in astronomy and historic preservation. Foodways programs at **Casa Navarro** and **Landmark Inn** attract different visitor groups interested in food heritage, cooking, and historic horticulture.

In 2016, the THC proudly welcomed **Mission Dolores** State Historic Site in San Augustine. The site tells the story of Texas' early Spanish colonial days and challenging relations with American Indians. Ultimately abandoned in 1773, Mission Dolores is now the site of a captivating museum.

This fascinating site was developed more than a decade ago by the City of San Augustine and is the subject of one of the THC's exceptional items in the 2017 legislative session. The THC hopes to address deferred maintenance issues and refresh the aging exhibits, bringing new life to this compelling story.

Mission Dolores joins the THC's other 20 sites, all supporting local heritage tourism, authentic sensory experiences, and enhanced learning. The THC's portfolio of sites includes an array of historic structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, and artifacts spanning 1,200 years of Texas history.

By effectively promoting diverse and unique programs, the agency has expanded its target market and built a larger visitor base. A number of programs have been developed at the state historic sites, including stargazing, foodways, living history, and more. These programs extend history education into other affinity and interest groups.





FULTON MANSION



MAGOFFIN HOME VISITORS CENTER



SAM RAYBURN HOUSE

## ANOTHER TWO YEARS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRESS

The **Fulton Mansion** restoration was a two-year, top-to-bottom project that meticulously preserved and restored this three-story Victorian gem. It included restoration of the slate roof, gutter, and lightning protection systems with significant repairs to the original wood windows, doors, and siding. The building was repainted, damaged stucco replaced, and the porch improved to withstand coastal storms.

In addition to restoring the historic hotel building itself, the **Landmark Inn** restoration included enhancements to visitor accommodations and program space, an improved parking lot, slope stabilization and erosion control, and upgraded public access.

These improvements will make the site an enjoyable destination for generations to come.

At the **Magoffin Home**, the rehabilitation of an early 20th-century house across the street from the site provided a needed visitor and interpretation center to support the house museum's operations. The work included a parking lot, staff offices, museum store, program space, and improved visitor amenities. The new visitors center enabled THC to expand programming and is an excellent example of historic building reuse in the Magoffin neighborhood.

In Sheffield, **Fort Lancaster** unveiled its newly renovated visitors center, including a museum and exhibit area.

The **National Museum of the Pacific War** completed a number of facility upgrade projects in the 2015-16 biennium, including renovations of the Japanese Garden of Peace and the Nimitz Hotel roof, and upgrades to the Bush Gallery climate control system. By far its most significant capital improvement project is the Pacific Combat Zone renovation, on track for completion in early 2017. This project exemplifies the value of the public-private partnership between the THC and the Admiral Nimitz Foundation.

The THC proposes significant preservation work on the historic **Nimitz Hotel**, key elements of which remain from pioneer Fredericksburg. Charles Henry Nimitz, elected to the Texas House in 1890, operated the Nimitz Hotel from 1852. He hosted guests including Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, and President Rutherford B. Hayes. C.H. Nimitz

raised his grandson, Chester W. Nimitz, who would one day lead U.S. Pacific forces in World War II. The hotel building houses a separate Nimitz Museum where significant improvements are in planning stages.

A final major project was the preservation and adaptive reuse of the **Sam Rayburn House** barn as an interpretive facility. The barn was stabilized, restored, and enhanced with lighting and climate control to showcase Rayburn's newly restored vehicles and an exhibit on North Texas agriculture. The restoration of Rayburn's 1948 International Harvester Farmall Model "H" Tractor, 1951 Dodge Pickup, and his sister's 1955 Plymouth Savoy was a significant endeavor funded and carried out by Silver Eagle Distributors. A 1953 Chevrolet four-door sedan was recently donated to the site, and joins the Savoy and Dodge in the barn's interpretive space.



LANDMARK INN

HISTORIC HEIGHTS



FORT LANCASTER

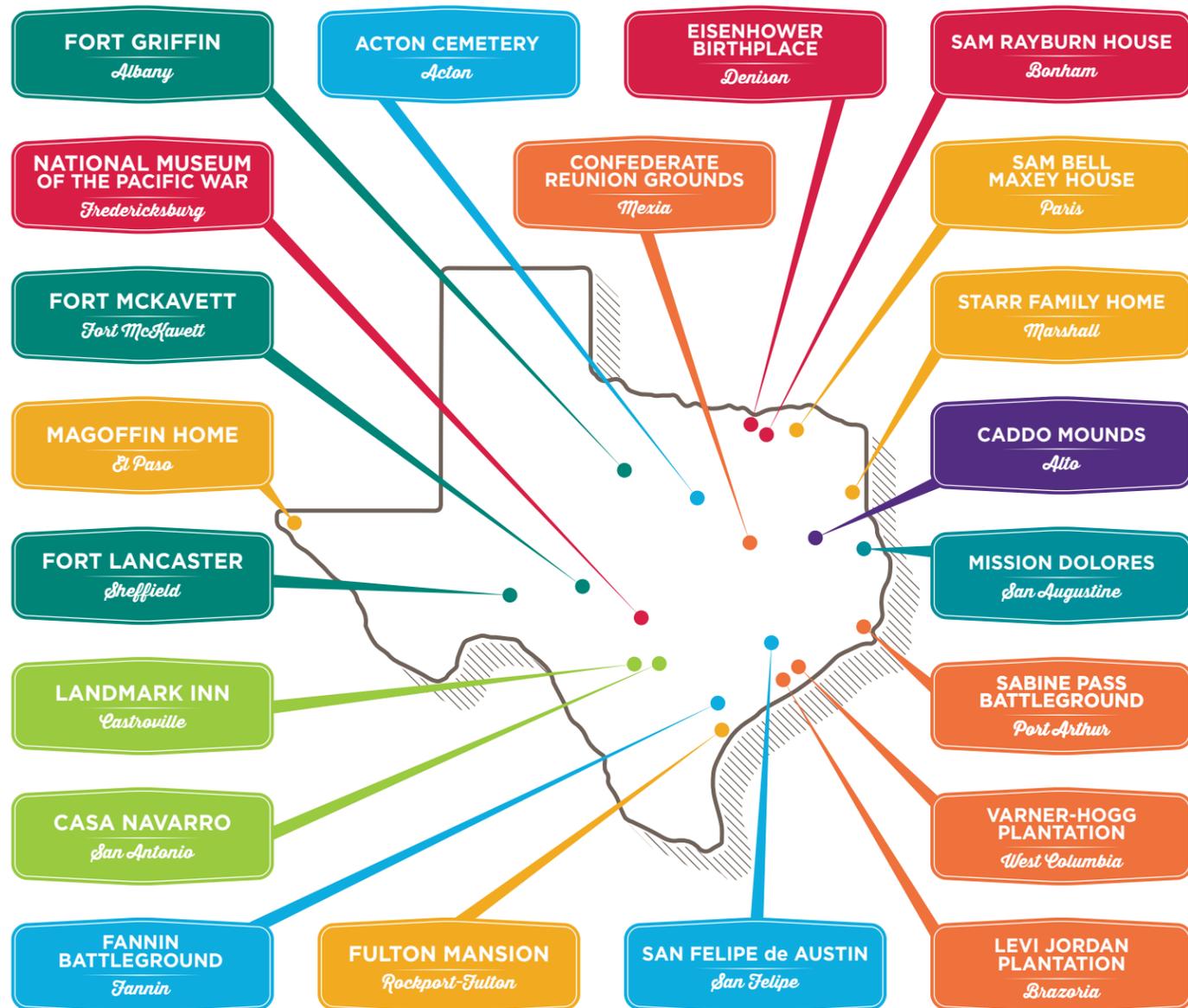
STATE HISTORIC SITES UPDATE 2017



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR  
Nimitz Hotel

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# OUR 21 STATE HISTORIC SITES



*Telling the story of Texas through the ages*



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THE FUTURE

Of the Texas Historical Commission's 21 state historic sites, 11 have active Friends groups that provide operational and programming support through volunteers.

In the last biennium, the Friends of **Fulton Mansion**, Friends of **Caddo Mounds**, and Friends of **Casa Navarro** assisted these sites in meeting operational and capital improvement needs. Fundraising assistance has helped support the restoration of the **Fulton Mansion** and built a new Caddo grass house at **Caddo Mounds**.

Construction is underway on a new museum at **San Felipe de Austin** State Historic Site, the capital of Stephen F. Austin's original 1823 land grant colony under Mexico. This 10,000-square-foot facility will greet visitors with an exciting, technologically rich interactive exhibit hall, as well as programming space for school groups and others. The facility is designed with a large covered map plaza depicting the formal surveyed plat of the community, based on the Mexican town model of gridded streets and avenues with interspersed plazas. Active archeology is planned for the site to help researchers learn and teach the public more about life in the early colony and the days leading to the Texas Revolution. An Education Zone showcasing historic building trades and representations of historic buildings is being planned. Located on the Brazos River, just off Interstate 10 near Sealy, the site will attract travelers coming and going from Houston to learn more about the history of the great state of Texas.

The **Levi Jordan Plantation** State Historic Site in Brazoria is a significant site focused on the story of slavery and the people that built Texas agriculture. Planning is underway to build a museum to showcase the important history of this site. In addition, staff is working on building an archeology program to bring the story of the enslaved people to life. These projects and the entire network of the THC's state historic sites reinforce the spirit of Texas and illustrate the complexity of the state's history. The historic sites serve all and are vital resources in supporting Texans' pride of identity and place.



CADDO MOUNDS



SAN FELIPE de AUSTIN



LEVI JORDAN



CASA NAVARRO



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# THE THC'S STATE HISTORIC SITES ARE ECONOMIC CATALYSTS IN TEXAS.



**697,563**

People who visited the THC's historic sites or participated in educational programs in fiscal years 2015-16



**98,656**

Volunteer hours contributed at the THC's historic sites in fiscal years 2015-16



**183**

Major maintenance projects completed in fiscal years 2015-16



**11**

Active Friends groups supporting historic sites